Australian Bureau of Statistics

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More industrial disputes in 1998 but fewer working days lost

There were 518 industrial disputes reported in Australia in 1998, 71 more than the previous year according to data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This is the first increase in the number of disputes for a calendar year since 1995.

However, the number of working days lost through industrial disputation decreased marginally from 534,200 to 526,200 between 1997 and 1998. This was the second consecutive calendar year decrease in working days lost and the lowest figure for a calendar year since 1994 (501,600).

Approximately 85% of the 526,200 working days lost occurred in three States - New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. New South Wales recorded the largest absolute increase in working days lost from 153,700 in 1997 to 188,500 in 1998 followed by South Australia, up from 8,000 to 16,100 over the same period. The largest decrease in working days lost was recorded in Queensland, down from 92,000 in 1997 to 51,500 in 1998 and the lowest recorded for a calendar year for that State since 1947 (31,200).

The Construction industry recorded 210,900 working days lost in 1998 or 40% of the national total. Other industries that reported a relatively large number of working days lost were Manufacturing with 95,300 working days lost, a 35% decrease from the 145,600 recorded in 1997 and the Education; Health and community services industries with 75,600 working days lost, a 20% decrease from the 94,000 recorded in 1997. The Coal mining industry recorded a decrease in working days lost, down by 36% from 95,700 in 1997 to 60,400 in 1998.

There were 72 working days lost per thousand employees in 1998, a small decrease from the 75 recorded in 1997, and the lowest calendar year rate since this measure was first compiled in 1967. Victoria (108), Western Australia (83) and New South Wales (78) recorded above the national rate.

Details are in **Industrial Disputes, Australia, 1998** (cat. no. 6322.0) available from ABS Bookshops. A summary of the publication may be found on this site.

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